

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMCONSUL SURABAYA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1080
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMCONSUL MEDAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SURABAYA 0410

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, ID
SUBJECT: STUDENTS REACT TO OPERATION CLEANUP IN SURABAYA

1. OVER THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS, THREE INTERLACED CAMPAIGNS FOR
PUBLIC ORDER AND CLEANLINESS HAVE DISRUPTED THE ACCUSTOMED LIFESTYLE OF

SURABAYA'S CITIZENRY. THE OVER-ARCHING CAMPAIGN, OPERATION TERTIB,
WAS LAUNCHED IN CONJUNCTION WITH A NATIONAL EFFORT TO ABOLISH
ILLEGAL FEE COLLECTIONS AND TO LIMIT EXCESS WEIGHT LOADS CARRIED
BY TRUCKS TO METROPOLITAN CENTERS. A SECOND CAMPAIGN WAS LAUNCHED
SHORTLY AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE GENERAL ELECTION WHEN THE GOVER-
NOR OF EAST JAVA DESCRIBED SURABAYA AS INDECENTLY DIRTY AND DISORDER-
LY. THE THIRD CAMPAIGN, INTERWOVEN WITH THE SECOND BUT OF LESS SIG-
NIFICANCE, WAS AN INTENSIVE EFFORT TO CLEAN AND DECORATE THE CITY IN
PREPARATION FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS ON THE 17TH.

2. A FEW WEEKS AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE GENERAL ELECTION, EAST
JAVE GOVERNOR SUNANDAR PUBLICLY DENOUNCED THE CITY GOVERNMENT IN A
SPEECH THAT DECRIED THE CORRUPTION AND LAXITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT,
THE DIFFICULTIES OF TRAFFIC CONGESTION, WHICH ARE COMPOUNDED BY HAWK-
ERS ON THE STREETS, AND THE WIDESPREAD DISREGARD OF TRAFFIC REGUL-
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ATIONS. HE DESCRIBED PUBLIC BEHAVIOR AS UNDISCIPLINED AND BECOMING MORE
SO EACH DAY. THE GOVERNOR ANNOUNCED THAT HE WOULD GIVE THE CITY
UNTIL THE END OF THE YEAR TO GET CLEANED UP.

3. SHORTLY AFTER THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH, SURABAYA MAYOR SUPARNO
INAUGERATED A CAMPAIGN TO MOVE ROADSIDE STALLS OUT OF THE

MAJOR STREETS USED FOR PROTOCOL AND ECONOMIC PURPOSES. CALLED OPER-ASI TEGAS II (OPGAS II), THIS CLEANUP CAMPAIGN FEATURED POLICE SWEEPING THE SMALL HAWKERS OF FOOD AND CIGARETTES OFF THE SIDEWALKS AND CURBS AND REMOVING SQUATTERS FROM THEIR MAKESHIFT DWELLINGS ALONG RIVERS AND CANALS IN THE CITY. SINCE THE 1950'S, MANY OF THOSE SURABAYANS NOT ENGAGED IN PEDALLING BETCAKS HAVE MADE THEIR LIVING SELLING SMALL COMMERCIAL ITEMS AND FOOD ON THE STREETS AND SIDEWALKS OF THE CITY. DURING THE LAST TWO WEEKS, REPORTS HAVE APPEARED IN THE LOCAL PRESS OF OVERENTHUSIASTIC POLICE SQUADS TEARING DOWN AND BURNING STALLS AND SEIZING THE VENDORS' MERCHANDISE. AFTER THE POLICE SWEEPED THROUGH ONE AREA OF THE CITY WHICH HAD AN ESPECIALLY HEAVY CONCENTRATION OF THESE MAKESHIFT SHOPS AND SMALL STANDS, ONE OBSERVER SAID THAT THE SCENE LOOKED LIKE A WAR-ZONE.

4. WHILE THE STALL OWNERS THEMSELVES HAVE NOT ORGANIZED THEIR OWN PROTEST AGAINST OPGAS II, A GROUP OF 40 STUDENTS UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF AIRLANGGA UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT COUNCIL (DEMA UNAIR) HAVE ENDEAVORED TO PERSUADE THE CITY GOVERNMENT TO HALT THE CLEANUP CAMPAIGN. THE THRUST OF THE STUDENT PROTEST IS THAT ONLY THE SMALLEST VENDORS ARE BEING CLOSED DOWN AND THAT THOSE AFFECTED BY OPGAS II TEND TO BE PRIBUMI--INDIGENOUS INDONESIANS--WHO ARE ESPECIALLY POOR AND HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE SOURCE OF INCOME. THE STUDENTS SAY THESE PEOPLE WILL BE FORCED TO BECOME UNEMPLOYED OR RESORT TO CRIME. THEY ALSO PRIVATELY SUGGEST THAT NO SIMILAR ACTION HAS BEEN FORTHCOMING AGAINST THE LARGE CHINESE AND INDONESIAN

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BUSINESSMAN WHO CAN PAY OFF THE POLICE BUT WHOSE BUSINESS, NEVERTHELESS, SPILLS OUT ONTO THE SIDEWALKS AND STREET SO THAT TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIANS ARE OBSTRUCTED.

5. THE STUDENTS MANAGED TO MEET THE MAYOR FACE TO FACE ON AUGUST 9 AND FELT THEY CAME AWAY WITH A CONSENSUS AGREEMENT TO HALT THE SEVERE HANDLING OF STREET VENDORS. WHEN THE POLICE ACTION CONTINUED, THE STUDENTS CALLED A PRESS CONFERENCE AND ISSUED A ULTIMATUM SAYING QUOTE IF THE MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION CONTINUES TO IGNORE THE CONSENSUS REACHED, DEMA UNAIR WILL TAKE STEPS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSCIENCE OF INDONESIAN STUDENTS AS A MORAL FORCE UNQUOTE. THERE FOLLOWED SOME PRIVATE CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN CITY OFFICIALS AND STUDENT LEADERS, AND ON AUGUST 13, THE MAYOR AGAIN MET THE STUDENTS AND SIGNED A CONSENSUS AGREEMENT, JOINTLY DRAWN-UP, WHICH SAID OPGAS II

SHOULD NOT DEPRIVE PEOPLE OF THEIR LIVELIHOOD, BOTH SIDES SHOULD FOLL-

OW CITY REGULATIONS, AND STREET VENDORS SHOULD REMAIN CALM AND ASSIST IN THE CREATIONS OF A CITY CLIMATE CONDUCIVE TO THE CITY'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. THUS, IN GOOD JAVANESE STYLE, CONFRONTATION WAS AVERTED.

COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE STUDENTS MAY HAVE WON SOME KIND OF MORAL

VICTORY BY MANEUVERING THE MAYOR INTO ACTUALLY SIGNING AN AGREEMENT ON OPGAS II, THE CLEANUP CAMPAIGN IS CONTINUING UNABATED. WHETHER THE PACE WILL SUBSIDE AFTER THE CAMPAIGN TO BEAUTIFY THE CITY FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY (AUGUST 17) WILL INDICATE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THIS

EFFORT. DURING THE LAST COUPLE OF DAYS THERE HAVE APPEARED LARGE RED BANNERS ACROSS THE MAJOR STREETS OF THE CITY PROCLAIMING SLOGANS LIKE QUOTE A CLEAN CITY IS A DEVELOPING CITY UNQUOTE. RUMORS HAVE BEEN FLOATING THAT POLITICAL FORCES OPPOSED TO SUPARNO'S REPORTED RE-ASSIGNMENT AS GOVERNOR OF EAST KALIMANTAN WILL SOON INITIATE A PRESS CAMPAIGN AGAINST HIM THAT WILL ACCUSE HIM OF ENRICHING HIS PERSONAL BUSINESS INTERESTS THROUGH VARIOUS CITY PROJECTS. THESE PRESSURES MAY HAVE PROMPTED THE MAYOR TO TAKE THE UNDIGNIFIED STEP OF ACTUALLY SIGNING AN AGREEMENT WITH A BUNCH OF STUDENTS SO THAT WHATEVER OTHER

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POLITICAL PROBLEMS HE NOW HAS WILL NOT BE COMPOUNDED BY STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS IN FRONT OF CITY HALL.

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